

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5906

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, April 18, 2013

Title: An act relating to maintaining access to state recreational lands managed by the department of natural resources.

Brief Description: Maintaining access to state recreational lands managed by the department of natural resources.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Hill, Holmquist Newbry, Hargrove, Becker, Sheldon, Bailey, Eide, Pearson, Brown, Baumgartner, Harper, Braun, Hasegawa, Rivers, Nelson, Schoesler, Shin, Keiser, Ericksen, Billig, Parlette, Conway, Honeyford and Fraser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 4/16/13, 4/18/13 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5906 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hill, Chair; Baumgartner, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Capital Budget Chair; Nelson, Assistant Ranking Member; Bailey, Becker, Braun, Conway, Dammeier, Fraser, Hasegawa, Hatfield, Kohl-Welles, Padden, Parlette, Ranker, Rivers, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Sherry McNamara (786-7402)

Background: The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages approximately 3 million acres of lands to benefit public institutions, counties, as well as a number of preserves and conservation areas. In addition, DNR is generally responsible for the enforcement of the state's natural resources laws, monitoring recreational activities on DNR land, and monitoring criminal activity as it relates to DNR land.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Requires DNR to increase the number of officers, subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, to protect the state's natural resources and ensure safe recreation on department-managed lands. With the additional enforcement presence, DNR is required to undertake efforts to achieve the maintenance of, and if possible an increase in, access to and recreational opportunities on

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department-managed lands. During the 2013-15 biennium, DNR is required to maintain access to department-managed lands and may not close any recreation areas except for reasons cited in RCW 79.10.125.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute):

- Removes appropriations.
- Requires DNR to increase the number of officers, subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, to protect the state's natural resources and ensure safe recreation on department-managed lands.
- With additional enforcement presence, DNR is required to undertake efforts to achieve the maintenance of, and if possible an increase in, access to and recreational opportunities on department-managed lands.
- During the 2013-15 biennium, DNR is required to maintain access to department-managed lands and may not close any recreation areas except for reasons cited in RCW 79.10.125.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: This bill is about our state's public lands and the use of those lands by our citizens. People who want to hunt, fish, hike, or ride their ORVs are finding that our public lands are being closed. Currently, DNR has nine law enforcement officers and one chief for the state's 5.6 million acres of public land; with only two officers to cover all of eastern Washington. The resources provided in this bill will help DNR to ensure that recreation on DNR-managed lands will be safe, enjoyable, and accessible for our children and our grandchildren. Funding is critical for keeping DNR-managed lands open and safe. There have been approximately 2000 incidents reported on our public lands for our law enforcement officers to handle. DNR leveraged other resources to help with enforcement, including other local law enforcement agencies, as well as Fish and Wildlife officers.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Roach, prime sponsor; Deb Essman, Kittitas Field and Stream; Mark Mauren, Larry Raedel, DNR; Arthur West, citizen.